

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /092 W  
-----080980 261433Z /46

R 261213Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7607  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5215

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, TS, EG, LY  
SUBJ: TUNISIAN REACTION TO EGYPTIAN - LIBYAN HOSTILITIES

1. ON JULY 23 PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA ISSUED AN APPEAL TO BOTH LIBYA AND EGYPT TO CEASE "FRATRICIDAL" HOSTILITIES AND TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN TWO CAPITALS. ALTHOUGH TEXT OF APPEAL AND MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS DELIVERED HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC, BOURGUIBA WAS REPORTED BY TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT NEWS AGENCY AS HAVING APPEALED TO HIGHER CAUSE OF ARAB UNITY AND BROTHERHOOD, CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES. EDITORIAL IN GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED DAILY "LA PRESSE" COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT'S APPEAL REFERRED TO CONFLICT AS BEING ABLE TO RESOLVE NOTHING. ADJECTIVES SUCH AS "REGRETTABLE", "ABSURD" AND "SAD" WERE USED.

2. MEDIA OF JULY 26 REPORTED THAT IN INTERVIEW CARRIED ON FRENCH TELEVISION JULY 25 (ON OCCASION 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF TUNISIAN REPUBLIC) PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA EXPRESSED PROFOUND  
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SADNESS AT DISTRESSING SITUATION IN WHICH ARAB ARMS AND RESOURCES ARE USED AGAINST BROTHER ARABS AT VERY MOMENT WHEN THERE IS NEED TO CLOSE RANKS AND SHOW SOLIDARITY IN FACE OF ZIONIST PERIL. HE REPEATED APPEAL FOR CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS.

3. MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN POINTEDLY BALANCED, USUALLY CITING

BOTH LIBYAN AND EGYPTIAN SOURCES. PARTY, GOVERNMENT AND INDEPENDENT PAPERS HAVE ALL STUDIOUSLY AVOIDED EDITORIALIZING ON CONFLICT WITH EXCEPTION OF JULY 24 EDITORIAL IN "LA PRESSE" SUPPORTING PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S "APPEAL TO REASON"; AND EDITORIAL IN INDEPENDENT WEEKLY TUNIS HEBDO ON JULY 25 ENTITLED "IT IS A SHAME". EXTENSIVE NEWS COVERAGE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO MEDIATION EFFORTS OF RIAD, BOUMEDIENE AND ARAFAT, ALTHOUGH GOT HAS NOT FORMALLY ASSOCIATED ITSELF WITH SUCH INTERVENTIONS.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT GOT HAS MADE CONSCIOUS DECISION NOT TO OFFEND EITHER CAIRO OR TRIPOLI, AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY IT IS GOING TO PAINS TO DO NOTHING THAT COULD HARM RELATIONS WITH EITHER EGYPT OR LIBYA IN FUTURE. FACT THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO EMPHASIS GIVEN TO EGYPT'S CLAIMS OF LIBYAN PROVOCATION SEEMS TO CAST TREATMENT OF CONFLICT IN SLIGHTLY PRO-LIBYAN LIGHT. WE SUSPECT THAT GOT IS WELL AWARE OF THIS, AND IS TAKING SUCH PRECAUTIONS IN ORDER NOT TO JEOPARDIZE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN TUNISIAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS. SIMILARLY, GOT APPROACH SEEMS TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF ALGERIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS, AND THIS ALSO CAN BE SEEN IN CONTEXT OF APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL VISIT OF INTERIOR MINISTER BELKHODJA TO ALGERIA JULY 16 - 22. WE CAN ONLY WONDER IF CAIRO WILL BE ENTIRELY HAPPY WITH TUNISIAN NEUTRALITY IN VIEW OF INTIMACY OF TUNISIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WHICH HAS DEVELOPED OVER PAST YEAR AS RESULT OF COMMONLY HELD MISTRUST OF QADHAFI AND HIS ULTIMATE INTENTIONS. WE SUSPECT THAT TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT IS JUST AS CONFIDENTIAL

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APPREHENSIVE OF LIBYA AS BEFORE, BUT THAT GOT SEES NO PURPOSE IN SAYING SO PUBLICLY.  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PFOR, PDIP, PBOR, TS, EG, LY, (BOURGUIBA, HABIB)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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